

## Harness Racing Terms to Know!

**Also Eligible:** Horse officially entered in a race, but not permitted to start unless field is reduced by scratch(es).

**Backstretch:** The straightaway on the far side of the racetrack. Also refers to the stable area.

**Card:** Another term for a program of racing. For example, someone might say there are ten races on tonight's 'card', meaning there will be ten races contested that night.

**Catch Driver:** A driver who doesn't train his/her horses and is hired by other trainers and owners to drive their horses.

**Chart:** A comprehensive account of a race showing the positions of all horses at various stages of the race.

**Colours:** The special colourful jacket worn by drivers in a race. Unlike Thoroughbred jockeys, drivers register their own colours and wear them every time they race.

**Colt:** A male horse three years of age or younger.

**Conditioned Race:** A race where eligibility is based on age, sex, money won or races won. An example would be 2 Year Old Colts, Non-winners of \$5,000 or 2 races life.

**Cover:** A horse which races with another horse in front of him is said to race with cover, as the leading horse cuts the wind resistance.

**Driver:** The person holding a license or permit to drive harness horses. There are different types of licenses, which correspond to differing levels of experience.

**Favourite:** The horse considered most likely to win based on the odds and past performance.

**Filly:** A female horse three years of age or younger.

**First Over:** The first horse to make a move on the leader in a race, moving up on the outside.

**Gelding:** An altered (neutered) male of any age.

***DID YOU KNOW???***

**All racehorses celebrate  
their birthdays on January  
1st**

**A small indent in a  
horses skin (usually on  
the neck or shoulder) is  
called a prophet's mark  
and is considered  
*good luck.***

**Handicapping:** The first step in successfully picking a winner (or handicapping) is becoming familiar with reading the racing program. Each program has a section explaining the information format used at that track. Probably the best place to start when handicapping Standardbreds is time. Since over 99 percent of all harness races are conducted at the one mile distance, valid comparisons can be made among the horses.

**Harness:** The gear which is used to attach the sulky to the horse, to carry the hobbles and to enable the driver to steer the horse.

**Home Stretch:** The straight length of the track, nearest the spectators, where the finish line is situated. It is called this because it is the final part of the track a horse travels down during a race, on its race home (or to the finish line).

**Hopples:** The straps which connect the front and rear legs on the same side of a horse. Most pacers wear hobbles to help balance their stride and maintain a pacing gait. The length of hobbles is adjustable and a trainer registers the length that best fits his/her horse. There are also trotting hobbles that work through a pulley system to help trotters maintain their gait.

**Horse (Stallion):** A male horse four years of age or older.

**Maiden:** A horse who has never won a race with a purse. (Also refers to a mare who has never had a foal.)

**Mare:** A female horse four years of age or older.

**Post Position:** Generally, the closer a horse starts to the inside rail, or barrier of the track, especially on smaller tracks, the better its chance of winning. At the start, horses must either "leave" (start quickly) to get a good position or else find a place on the rail to avoid racing on the outside of other horses. When racing on the outside the horse is said to be parked out and loses ground on every turn. A horse on the inside has a better chance to get to the rail or quickly get a good position.

**Starter:** The person responsible for starting a harness race. The starter controls the start of the race from the back of the mobile starting gate.

**Sulky:** Also known as the cart or racebike, the sulky is attached to the harness and carries the driver which the horse pulls.

**Yearling:** Any horse between its first and second birthday.